



**An unusual cause of headache in pregnancy**  
Try the case scenario in ENDGAMES, p 35

When is it better to be fat? The answer—do not adjust your spectacles—is if you have almost any kind of heart problem or cardiovascular risk factor. The latest source of data on the relation between body mass index (BMI) and outcomes in patients with or at high risk of atherosclerosis is REACH (*European Heart Journal* 2015, doi:10.1093/eurheartj/ehv347), an international, prospective cohort of 54 285 such people with full data on risk factors and protective drugs. When these confounders were adjusted for, the lowest hazard ratio for all cause mortality, cardiovascular mortality, and cardiovascular events was found in patients with a BMI of 30-40. This is consistent with the totality of evidence, as explained in the linked editorial (doi:10.1093/eurheartj/ehv414).

Lots of viruses are known to promote cancer, but now a bacterium may join their ranks. *Fusobacterium nucleatum* thrives on plaque in the mouth, but when it lives in the bowel it may help promote colorectal cancer. Using a molecular pathological epidemiology database of 1069 rectal and colon cancer cases in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, a Harvard based study measured *F nucleatum* DNA in carcinoma tissue (*Gut* 2015, doi:10.1136/gutjnl-2015-310101). The presence of such DNA was associated with faster cancer progression.

A study from Korea serves as a reminder that outlook in heart failure is determined by the degree of ventricular strain, as indicated by circulating levels of B-type natriuretic peptide (NT-BNP), not the left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF). In a cohort of patients admitted with heart failure, the prognosis of patients with a given NT-BNP level was the same, regardless of their LVEF (*Heart* 2015, doi:10.1136/heartjnl-2015-307782).

"They just put me in a Spitfire and it went off like an electric eel," said one lovely old Battle of Britain pilot on television recently. Without Hitler's men in the sky trying to kill them, modern airline pilots spend a month training on a simulator before they are allowed near real operations. Why is the same not universally true of surgeons in 2015? A Danish study investigated whether individual or



An 85 year old woman taking immunosuppressants for an exacerbation of Crohn's disease described increasing left shoulder pain. Shoulder and chest radiographs were normal. She subsequently developed a tender erythematous swelling in her left neck. Computed tomography identified left sternoclavicular joint (SCJ) septic arthritis, secondary left sternocleidomastoid abscess (A), and pathological fracture of the clavicle (B). A high index of suspicion of septic arthritis of the SCJ is therefore needed in at risk patients; incidence increases in immunosuppressed patients. It presents with shoulder and chest pain and is best diagnosed on computed tomography. Complications include neck abscess and mediastinitis.

**Kiruthiga Sivakolunthu** ([ksivakolunthu@gmail.com](mailto:ksivakolunthu@gmail.com)), foundation year 2 doctor, **Tawakir Kamani**, specialty registrar, ENT Department, Royal Derby Hospital, Derby DE22 3NE, UK  
Patient consent obtained.  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2015;351:h4967

group virtual reality training was the best way to teach medical students how to perform mastoidectomies (*JAMA Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery* 2015, doi:10.1001/jamaoto.2015.1563). Self directed simulator practice seemed effective at accelerating the initial learning curve, which tended to plateau after nine repetitions.

Septic arthritis in children is an uncommon but serious emergency, and organising a randomised interventional trial would be difficult. So an Israeli study used

observational data from a group of units with different policies on the early use of dexamethasone in these patients (*Pediatrics* 2015, doi:10.1542/peds.2014-4025). Children with septic arthritis treated early with a short course of adjuvant dexamethasone showed earlier improvement in clinical and laboratory parameters than those given antibiotics alone.

Vaccination against the four most oncogenic human papillomaviruses (HPVs) is proving a great success in preventing sexual transmission of HPV in younger age groups. But it can have other benefits too. A case report in *JAMA Dermatology* (2015, doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2015.2805) describes how quadrivalent HPV vaccination cleared recurrent chronic verrucous papules on the lips, tongue, and buccal mucosa of an immunocompromised man in his 60s. The article lists other reports of resolution of recalcitrant and disseminated warts after vaccination.

Although "Switzerland" and "end of life" are often spoken of together in the context of assisted suicide, this is a rare event there. A study shows that very few Swiss people with terminal illness complete advance directives or convey their wishes to those closest to them (*BMJ Supportive and Palliative Care* 2015, doi:10.1136/bmjspcare-2014-000730). The authors suggest that although advance directives have their place, "we should also be creative and find other ways to promote shared decision-making."

In 1979, as medical house officers struggled night and day at St George's Hospital, then overlooking Hyde Park in London, Joe Collier succoured them by producing the first set of guidelines for treating common medical emergencies. It was known as "The Grey Book," and for the next 30 years he kept it up to date with new editions almost every six months. Now in its 63rd edition (<http://bit.ly/1QZpOp3>), and edited by Teck Khong, the book is finally losing its greyness and its paper form. Henceforth it will transmit timely knowledge solely through electronic devices held by its grateful users, who can download it without charge.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2015;351:h5095